

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 FEA-01 ACDA-12 AGRE-00

AID-05 CEA-01 CEQ-01 CG-00 CIAE-00 COME-00

DLOS-09 DODE-00 DOTE-00 EB-08 EPA-01 ERDA-05

FMC-01 TRSE-00 H-01 INR-07 INT-05 IO-13 JUSE-00

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 NSF-01 OES-07 OMB-01 PA-01

PM-05 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /140 W

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R 290330Z OCT 77

FM AMEMBASSY VICTORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 578

INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS

CINCPAC

COMIDEASTFOR

C O N F I D E N T I A L VICTORIA 627

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PDIP, EFIS, EAID, SE, UR

SUBJECT: SEYCHELLES PRESIDENT EXPRESSES CONCERN ABOUT SOVIET PRESENCE

REF VICTORIA 480 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY. DURING OCT 28 MEETING, SEYCHELLES' PRESIDENT F.A. RENE TOLD CHARGE HE IS CONCERNED ABOUT LONG-RANGE INTENTIONS OF EXPANDING SOVIET DIPLOMATIC PRESENCE AND UPSET WITH CONTINUED "HEAVY FISHING" OF SEYCHELLES WATERS BY SOVIET TRAWLERS. RENE SAID HE HAS TURNED ASIDE SOVIET OFFERS OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND SCHOLARSHIPS BUT SOVIET AMBASSADOR
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HAS RECENTLY BECOME MORE "INSISTENT" ON CLOSER SEYCHELLES-SOVIET TIES. END SUMMARY.

2. IN COURSE OF LENGTHY OCT 28 MEETING REQUESTED BY CHARGE TO DISCUSS FY'78 BILATERAL PROGRAMS, PRESIDENT RENE SAID "IN CONFIDENCE" THAT HE IS CONCERNED ABOUT SOVIET INTENTIONS IN SEYCHELLES. RENE SAID HE IS

"PUZZLED AND WORRIED" THAT USSR HAS SENT SUCH SENIOR OFFICIALS AS AMBASSADOR ALEXANDER STARTSEV AND COUNSELOR BORIS SAMSONOV. HE ALSO EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT SOVIET EMBASSY STAFF PRESENTLY NUMBERS "AT LEAST ELEVEN EXCLUDING WIVES". ACCORDING RENE, SOVIET AMBASSADOR STARTSEV HAS BEEN PRESSING FOR A CLOSER RELATIONSHIP BUT OFFERS OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN DEVELOPING COMMERCIAL FISHING INDUSTRY AND SCHOLARSHIPS HAVE BEEN POLITELY REFUSED. ALSO TURNED ASIDE WAS A RECENT SUGGESTION THAT GOS OPEN GOVERNMENT BOOKSTORE WHERE SOVIET BOOKS AND PERIODICALS WOULD BE STOCKED. RENE CONFIDED THAT SENDING STUDENTS TO THE SOVIET UNION WOULD BE "COMPLETE WASTE."

3. RENE, VISIBLY UPSET, CRITICIZED THE SOVIETS FOR CONTINUING TO MAINTAIN "LARGE TRAWLER FLEETS" IN WATERS CLAIMED BY SEYCHELLES AS PART OF ITS MARITIME ZONE. HE CITED AN OCTOBER 1977 UNDP-SPONSORED SURVEY OF FISHING POTENTIAL, WHICH WAS CARRIED OUT BY A MULTI-NATIONAL SCIENTIFIC TEAM ABOARD SOVIET-REGISTERED SHIP "PROFESSOR MESYATSEV," AS EXAMPLE OF SOVIET "DUPLICITY". ACCORDING RENE, SHIP SENT RADIO MESSAGES TO SOVIET TRAWLERS IN AREA WHEN LARGE SCHOOLS OF FISH WERE LOCATED. GOS HAS PROTESTED TO STARTSEV OVER CONTINUING UNAUTHORIZED STOPS BY TRAWLERS AT SOME OF SEYCHELLES OUTLYING ISLANDS (REFTEL REFERS). RENE STRESSED THAT SEYCHELLES WOULD DEFEND ITS MARITIME ZONE BY FORCE IF NECESSARY ONCE PATROL

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CRAFT WERE OBTAINED. IN THIS VEIN HE CLAIMED TO HAVE TOLD STARTSEV SEYCHELLES WOULDN'T HESITATE "TO SINK" A SOVIET TRAWLER. GOS IS HOPEFUL OF ACQUIRING AN ARMED PATROL CRAFT (POSSIBLY FROM FRANCE) BY TIME SEYCHELLES' OWN TRAWLER FLEET SCHEDULED BEGIN OPERATIONS IN LATE 1978/EARLY 1979. MEANWHILE, RENE SAID HE WOULD APPRECIATE ANY EVIDENCE SHOWING SOVIET TRAWLERS ARE IN SEYCHELLES WATERS SO THAT GOVERNMENT COULD PROTEST.

4. RENE SAID PRELIMINARY FINDINGS OF UNDP SURVEY WERE EXTERMELY ENCOURAGING AND THAT CATCHES OF UP TO FOUR TONS PER HOUR WERE FEASIBLE ON SEYCHELLES BANK.

5. COMMENT. RENE'S REMARKS PROVIDE THE CLEAREST SIGN TO DATE THAT HE IS CONCERNED ABOUT THE SOVIET PRESENCE IN AND NEAR SEYCHELLES. IN ADDITION, THEY INDICATED THAT SMOOTH SOVIET-SEYCHELLES RELATIONS WILL BE HAMPERED AT LEAST SO LONG AS SOVIET TRAWLERS CONTINUE TO FISH IN SEYCHELLES WATERS. AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT RENE'S EXPRESSED VIEWS ARE NOT SUBSCRIBED TO BY SOME MINISTERS IN THE NEW GOVERNMENT WHICH SEIZED POWER LAST JUNE NOR ARE THEY REFLECTED IN THE OFFICIAL MEDIA

WHICH HAS BEEN FOCUSING INCREASINGLY ON "PROGRESSIVE"
GOVERNMENTS AND THEMES.
MATTSON

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Message Attributes

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